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Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1370 (2001) of 18 September 2001, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for a period of six months, ending on 30 March 2002. In that resolution, the Security Council also requested me to report at regular intervals on progress made by UNAMSIL in the implementation of its mandate. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and covers developments since my twelfth report on UNAMSIL, dated 13 December 2001 (S/2001/1195).

II. Political developments

Implementation of the Abuja Agreement

2. The peace process in Sierra Leone continued to make encouraging progress during the period under review. The disarmament of combatants of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) was completed on 11 January. As a follow-up, the Government of Sierra Leone launched a special programme to collect illegal weapons held by the civilian population and shotguns held mainly by the Civil Defence Forces, which had been excluded from the original disarmament programme. The resettlement of internally displaced persons commenced in all districts of the country, and more refugees were repatriated from Guinea and Liberia. With regard to the preparations for the elections, which are scheduled for 14 May 2002, the National Electoral Commission successfully conducted the voter registration process, and the Government lifted the state of emergency to allow free electoral campaigning by the political parties. In the meantime, the Sierra Leone police and army deployed to more districts, while the Government took further steps to extend its authority to areas formerly controlled by RUF. Progress was also made in the preparations for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court. The process of reintegrating the disarmed combatants into civilian society, however, remained slow because of inadequate funding. The conflict in Liberia also escalated, raising fears about possible repercussions on the progress made in Sierra Leone.

3. In view of the lifting of the state of emergency, which had provided the legal basis for their detention, former RUF leader Foday Sankoh, 49 other RUF members and more than 30 AFRC/ex-SLA members known as the West Side Boys were brought before the Sierra Leonean courts on 4 and 11 March, and charged with murder and other criminal offences. The Attorney-General of Sierra Leone announced that these charges would not prejudice any case the Special Court for Sierra Leone might decide to bring against those individuals.

Regional aspects

4. The conflict in Liberia escalated during the reporting period, forcing large numbers of Sierra Leonean refugees to return and almost 10,000 Liberian refugees to flee into southern and eastern Sierra Leone. On two occasions, elements of the armed forces of Liberia, fleeing from the fighting, crossed the border into Sierra Leone. On both occasions, the Liberian soldiers voluntarily agreed to return to their country. There were persistent reports that the former RUF field commander, Sam Bockarie, remained active in the

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region and that both the Government of Liberia and dissident forces fighting in Liberia might have recruited some disarmed Sierra Leonean combatants.

5. In a positive development, the heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone met at Rabat on 27 February. The heads of State condemned all dissident activities in the Mano River Union subregion and agreed to work collectively to curb the activities of armed groups operating there. They also agreed to maintain regular contacts among themselves and to convene a follow-up summit meeting at Rabat. Subsequently, the Foreign and Security Ministers of the three countries met at Freetown on 6 and 7 March to discuss ways of implementing the decisions taken by their leaders at Rabat. The Ministers recommended that a committee of legal experts from the three countries should meet at Freetown in March to develop a legal framework for dealing with dissident groups. They also mandated a technical committee to begin implementing the decision to deploy joint security units along their common borders.

6. On 10 February, my Special Representative, Oluyemi Adeniji, travelled to Abuja, where he briefed the Secretariat of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) and the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, on the completion of the disarmament process and the ongoing preparations for elections. During those meetings, he urged the ECOWAS countries to contribute towards the reintegration of the ex-combatants in Sierra Leone. In the discussions with the ECOWAS Secretariat, it was agreed that my Special Representative would submit the final report of the Joint Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration to the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council at its next meeting.

III. Military and security situation

7. The overall security situation in Sierra Leone remained generally stable. There were, however, violent clashes between former CDF and RUF combatants over mining disputes in Kono district on 19 and 20 December. A total of 13 people were reportedly killed and 40 injured during those clashes. The violence resulted in large-scale displacement of the local population, some of whom were former displaced persons. UNAMSIL troops contained the incident, and assisted in transporting the displaced people back to their villages.

8. During the reporting period, the Sierra Leone army further deployed to Kailahun and Kono districts, in order to secure the country's borders. It also continued to consolidate its deployment in the strategic areas of Makeni, Magburaka, Masingbi and Lunsar. The Government has announced that the army will be renamed the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, with effect from 1 April.

Deployment of the Mission

9. UNAMSIL troops continued to conduct high-profile patrols throughout the country in order to deter violence and to reassure the population. The Mission also stepped up air and land patrols along the Sierra Leone/Liberia border in view of the escalation of fighting in Liberia.

10. UNAMSIL is currently focusing on implementing phase one of its military concept of operations for 2002, the main objective of which is to ensure effective security for the forthcoming elections. To that end, the Mission has extended its deployment to 39 locations throughout the country to provide umbrella security. In phase two, which is expected to begin soon, UNAMSIL intends to deploy to more areas, on a temporary basis, with a view to covering as many locations as possible over the polling period. During phase three, which begins after the elections, UNAMSIL will focus on sustaining a secure environment for the crucial post-election period. Throughout, the security umbrella will be provided in close coordination with the Sierra Leone police and the Sierra Leone army. A protocol was recently agreed, designed to delineate security responsibilities clearly, with particular emphasis on the primacy of Sierra Leone police activities. In the meantime, planning is already under way for the subsequent phases, which will focus on a careful assessment of the post-election security situation and a gradual adjustment of the strength, composition and deployment of the military component of UNAMSIL, expected to begin later in 2002.

11. I regret to inform the Council that six peacekeepers from the Zambian contingent were killed in a tragic accident on 5 January, while handling ammunitions collected during the disarmament process in Kenema district. Twelve others were seriously injured. The loss was all the more poignant as it

occurred at the end of the disarmament process and was the only serious incident experienced in the course of handling vast quantities of unstable ammunition during the programme. The Mission is tightening procedures for handling ammunition and unexploded ordnance. I wish to pay tribute to all the United Nations peacekeepers who lost their lives in the service of peace in Sierra Leone during the period under review.

IV. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

Disarmament and demobilization

12. The Joint Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, which comprises the Government of Sierra Leone, RUF and UNAMSIL, met on 17 January and declared that the disarmament process had been completed. Subsequently, ceremonies to mark the end of the war, with the destruction of weapons, were held in Lungi and in the provincial capitals of Bo, Makeni and Kenema.

13. A total of 47,076 combatants (19,183 RUF, 27,695 CDF and 198 AFRC/ex-SLA) disarmed during the period between 18 May 2001, when the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme resumed, and 17 January 2002, when it was formally completed. During the same period, 15,840 assorted weapons and 2 million rounds of ammunition were collected. Prior to the resumption of the programme in May 2001, 11,824 weapons had been collected in the two disarmament phases, which were carried out from October to December 1998 and from November 1999 to May 2000. UNAMSIL has so far destroyed a total of 24,944 weapons, including 10,800 collected before May 2001. Some of the weapons were turned into tools under a project implemented jointly by UNAMSIL and GTZ, a German development organization. The United Kingdom troops in Sierra Leone assisted UNAMSIL in the destruction of unstable ammunition in Tongo, Kenema district.

14. The special programme for the voluntary collection of shotguns and illegal arms held by the civilian population was conducted by the Sierra Leone police with the assistance of UNAMSIL and is expected to be completed by mid-March. As at 7 March, the programme had collected 8,536 weapons, and 33,968 pieces of ammunition. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is preparing to finance a follow-up project under the Small Arms Trust Fund aimed at providing long-term assistance in strengthening the institutional capacity of the Sierra Leone police to deal with illegal arms. As indicated in my last report, the Secretariat is preparing to send a mission to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone. It should be recalled that a considerable number of the weapons and equipment seized by RUF from UNAMSIL and the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) remain unaccounted for. The assessment mission will, among other things, look into this matter. I am grateful to the donor countries that have agreed to finance this important project.

Reintegration of ex-combatants

15. Funding for the Government-managed reintegration programme continues to experience a serious shortfall, now estimated at $13.48 million for the year 2002. On a positive note, however, all disarmed combatants have received their initial reinsertion payment, which is intended to assist them in settling in their communities. To date, 17,951 ex-combatants have been absorbed in various short-term reintegration projects. These include 4,552 in agriculture, 5,331 in vocational training, 3,871 in formal education, 3,240 in apprenticeships in various trades, 589 in public works and 368 in child reintegration projects. In addition, some 1,723 ex-combatants (1,028 RUF, 632 CDF and 63 AFRC/ex-SLA) have so far been selected for reintegration into the Sierra Leone army. Besides inadequate funding, the absence of service providers in most areas in the east and north of the country has also slowed down the reintegration programme. UNAMSIL, UNDP and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) are implementing stopgap projects to occupy the ex-combatants in potentially volatile areas such as Kono and Kailahun districts.

V. Governance and stabilization

Extension of State authority

16. Upon the completion of the disarmament exercise, the Government took further steps to extend its authority throughout the country. Paramount chiefs and chiefdom officials returned to all districts, except Kailahun where disarmament was completed in mid-

January. The relocation of district officers from Freetown to areas formerly controlled by RUF in the northern and eastern provinces is also under way. During the reporting period, district officers returned to Kono, Koinadugu and Tonkolili districts. The high courts in Kenema and Bo, as well as the magistrates' courts in Port Loko, were reopened. The Sierra Leone police deployed to all districts, albeit in small numbers and, gradually, officials of line Ministries have also started returning.

17. However, the Government continued to face serious capacity constraints in its efforts to restore civil administration and public services throughout the country. In particular, the absence of qualified personnel, destroyed infrastructure, and the lack of office and communications equipment and transportation for the returning officials remained the major impediments to the efforts to accelerate the extension of the Government's authority. The immediate needs for the restoration of basic public services in the newly accessible districts were identified and presented to the donor mission that visited Sierra Leone early in February 2002. UNDP and other United Nations bodies, as well as DFID, continued to assist the Government to address some of the capacity constraints.

18. In the meantime, housing committees established in some districts played a key role in resolving disputes over properties illegally occupied by former RUF combatants. Efforts are under way to establish similar committees in other affected districts. UNAMSIL also facilitated meetings between former RUF cadres and paramount chiefs to resolve issues pertaining to property ownership, collection of market dues, illicit mining and the status of caretaker chiefs designated by RUF during the conflict.

19. The Government of Sierra Leone started implementing a new policy aimed at controlling artisan diamond mining. Under this policy, district mining committees, with the participation of local communities, are issuing mining licences. In addition, the Government has opened negotiations with concession holders to rehabilitate the industrial mining of underground kimberlite deposits. It is also studying options for the marketing and export of diamonds based on a study that was funded by DFID. The early adoption of a comprehensive and effective regime for diamond mining and marketing is of crucial importance to the economic viability and long-term stability of the country. Without such a regime, there is considerable danger of uncontrolled exploitation and illicit trade in diamonds, which may again destabilize the country.

Recovery activities

20. The National Recovery Committee continued to conduct assessment missions, which are being used to set priorities and to mobilize resources for ongoing rehabilitation efforts. On the basis of those assessments, district recovery strategies, together with a national interim recovery strategy, were developed. This strategy addresses key aspects of the transition from relief to recovery. It focuses on immediate action, essentially targeted at the restoration of State authority and basic social services, with the objective of laying the foundation for effective social and economic development. It further provides the Government, donors and non-governmental organizations with a coordinated approach and a road map for recovery assistance.

21. Through the Trust Fund for Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL has financed the construction of a dormitory for police trainees, as well as two police stations in Koidu and the Western Area, with funds provided by the Government of Japan. Other police stations are being rehabilitated in Kambia, Kabala, Daru, Moyamba and Lunsar using DFID funds and, in Lunsar, through a contribution from the Government of Norway. To date, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom have made generous contributions to the Trust Fund. Other donors, such as DFID, the European Union and UNDP have made substantial contributions to the rehabilitation of roads and administrative infrastructure in the country.

VI. Elections

22. The period under review witnessed further progress in the preparations for the presidential and parliamentary elections, which are to be held on 14 May 2002. On 22 January, the parliament of Sierra Leone adopted legislation that formally established the National Electoral Commission. On 31 January, it adopted a revised electoral law by which it increased the number of parliamentary seats from 80 to 124, consisting of 112 elected seats and 12 allocated to paramount chiefs. The revised law also provided for the district block electoral system, which was

explained in paragraph 38 of my last report (S/2001/1195), and allocated 8 parliamentary seats to each of the 14 districts.

23. The voter registration exercise was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere from 24 January to 10 February. The National Electoral Commission extended the registration period by three days, but some stakeholders considered it necessary to further extend the registration period for as long as possible, in order to accommodate as many eligible voters as possible. The Commission encountered logistical, technical and administrative difficulties during the registration exercise, ranging from inadequate voter education to late disbursement of funds and the refusal of some registration officials to carry out their duties because of misunderstandings about remuneration.

24. The retrieval of the voter registration forms was completed on 20 February. The processing of the forms was slowed down by the high number of soiled forms, however, as well as frequent interruptions in power supply. Consequently, the exhibition of the provisional voters register had to be postponed by one week, to the period from 9 to 13 March. The National Electoral Commission announced that a provisional total of 2,276,518 potential voters were registered, which compares well with the 1996 registration figure of 1,566,000.

25. The exhibition of the provisional voters register will not only enable registered voters to verify their names, but will also provide an opportunity to address allegations that the registration of minors and multiple registrations of voters occurred during the voter registration process. Local civil society groups, as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat and the European Union, observed the registration process. The processing and issuing of identity cards for the registered potential voters is under way. The photography centres established for this purpose are deployed around the country and are scheduled to remain open until 30 March.

26. The National Electoral Commission announced that returning refugees can register in transit camps, beginning in mid-April, provided they have identity cards issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to confirm their status. A large number of refugees returning from Liberia have already dispersed to their villages of origin, however, making it difficult to register them in the transit camps. The Commission therefore intends to organize mobile registration units to register the returnees. A mission consisting of the National Electoral Commission, UNHCR and UNAMSIL officials visited camps in Guinea from 2 to 7 February, to inform Sierra Leonean refugees about the situation in their country and the preparations for the elections.

27. With regard to internally displaced persons, those who return to their districts of origin prior to the elections will be allowed to request the transfer of their registration records to their respective districts. However, the National Electoral Commission has yet to announce details of voting arrangements for displaced persons who remain in camps until polling day.

28. Meanwhile, political parties in the country continued to prepare for the forthcoming elections. A total of 23 parties have registered. As indicated earlier, on 1 March President Kabbah announced the lifting of the state of emergency, thus opening the way for electoral campaigning by the political parties. RUF fulfilled the remaining requirement for registration as a political party by opening a regional office in the provincial capital of Kenema, but it still has to file an application for full registration. On 14 February, I received a letter from the RUF leader, Issa Sesay, in which he called for the lifting of the travel ban on RUF officials and requested the international community to provide assistance for his movement to transform itself into a political party. The former leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Johnny Paul Koroma, relinquished his position as chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, which was established under the Lomé Peace Agreement, and joined the Peace and Liberation Party.

29. At a meeting with the diplomatic corps in Freetown on 1 March, 11 opposition political parties renewed their criticism of the district block electoral system and called for a postponement of the elections until November 2002, as well as the formation of an interim government. Given the progress already made in the preparations for the elections, these calls are not expected to change the course of events. It is, however, important for the National Electoral Commission to maintain continuous dialogue with the political parties so as to build confidence in the electoral process.

Outstanding concerns and challenges

30. The voter registration exercise underlined the operational challenges that continue to face the National Electoral Commission, and which should be addressed in order to prevent difficulties that could hamper the conduct of critical activities on polling day. In particular, adequate planning of all aspects of the operation, effective communication between the Commission's headquarters and field offices, and timely disbursement of funds for the Commission by the Government, as well as effective voter education, adequate supply of materials and training of field staff, will be crucial to the successful conduct of the polling day activities. UNAMSIL and other partners are redoubling their efforts to assist the Commission to address shortcomings in these important areas.

31. Civil society groups and political parties continued to express concern at the lack of dialogue between them and the National Electoral Commission, which has held three meetings with political parties and civil society organizations during the reporting period. UNAMSIL and other external partners continued to encourage the Commission to hold more frequent consultations with all stakeholders. UNAMSIL has also emphasized to the National Electoral Commission the need for a more proactive public information strategy to promote better public understanding of the Commission's activities.

United Nations support for the elections

32. The electoral component of UNAMSIL is now established. During the reporting period, the Mission closely monitored the electoral process and provided advice to the National Electoral Commission on how to rectify shortcomings. UNAMSIL also provided logistical, security and public information support for the voter registration process in a coordinated manner. It opened regional electoral coordination offices in all three provinces of Sierra Leone, as well as the Western Area (Freetown). UNAMSIL helped the National Electoral Commission to transport voter registration materials and personnel to registration stations throughout the country, and subsequently to retrieve them.

33. As indicated earlier, UNAMSIL troops have made adjustments in their deployment in order to provide effective umbrella security for the electoral process. Delineation of security responsibilities between UNAMSIL troops and the Sierra Leone police has been finalized, and appropriate liaison arrangements are in place to enable the police to call on UNAMSIL for assistance. Rehearsals are being conducted to test the joint security arrangements for polling day.

34. UNAMSIL civilian police advisers, together with the Mission's military component, continued to assist the Sierra Leone police to develop guiding principles on point security for the elections through the creation of police operational orders. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1389 (2002), the Mission deployed 30 additional civilian police advisers who will perform election-related tasks, which include advising and supporting the Sierra Leone police in carrying out their election-related duties and helping them to devise and implement an electoral training programme for their personnel. It may be necessary to retain these additional police advisers after the elections in order to reinforce key dimensions of UNAMSIL support to the Sierra Leone police.

35. UNAMSIL also provided public information technical support, as well as facilities, to the National Electoral Commission to facilitate dissemination of information on the voter registration process. At the same time, it assisted the Commission to design election logos and posters that were used during the voter registration exercise, and provided training on the electoral process for national public information staff. Similar support will be provided for the next phases of the electoral process. The Mission established an elections information unit to enhance the effectiveness of its public information support to the electoral process.

36. Radio UNAMSIL was used effectively to broadcast information on the voter registration process and the exhibition of the provisional voters register. Broadcasting 24 hours a day, the Radio integrated electoral information into all of its programming, including its daily current affairs programmes and news broadcasts in English and local languages. The station is now in the process of testing newly installed radio transmitters, which will soon extend its reach to the entire territory of Sierra Leone. Other aspects of the Mission's public information activities for the elections included the airing of simple civic education messages.

Support by other partners

37. The International Foundation for Election Systems continued to provide technical advisers to the National Electoral Commission and materials and equipment to support the electoral process. The National Democratic Institute, a United States-based non-governmental organization, and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, which is funded by the United Kingdom, are implementing political party development projects in Freetown, which are intended to benefit all Sierra Leonean parties. Since my last report, the Governments of Canada and Germany have announced financial contributions to the UNDP Trust Fund for the Sierra Leone elections. The Trust Fund will also be used to facilitate the fielding of electoral observers from ECOWAS and the Organization of African Unity, and to conduct training for domestic observers and representatives of political parties.

VII. Human rights

38. The completion of the disarmament of RUF, CDF and AFRC/ex-SLA has resulted in a general improvement in the human rights situation in Sierra Leone. Access to more areas in the east has, however, revealed more evidence of atrocities committed during the conflict. UNAMSIL investigated past human rights abuses and serious breaches of international humanitarian law in Kono and Kailahun districts. Several mass graves were identified in a village north of Koidu. The recent deployment of the Sierra Leone army to Kailahun also brought to light the existence of alleged "execution houses" in the district, where civilians were reportedly tortured and killed. It is important to preserve these sites and sources of evidence until proper forensic analysis can be undertaken. UNAMSIL also collected testimonies from persons who were mutilated during the conflict. The Mission is developing a database to map the conflict and will inform the local human rights community about its experience in that area.

39. Conditions in police cells and prisons have generally improved during the period under review. The slow pace of installation of court facilities and the inadequate performance of judicial officials in many districts has, however, severely impaired the overall functioning of the administration of justice and the due process of law. In order to continue to closely monitor the human rights situation in the country, UNAMSIL opened a third regional human rights office in Port Loko.

Protection of women and children

40. Following the completion of the disarmament process, UNAMSIL human rights officers tracked cases involving former child combatants and abducted women in Kailahun district who have not been reintegrated into their former communities. They also investigated reports of former child combatants who are still being used for forced labour in diamond mining operations in Tongo Fields, Kenema district. While none of the abducted women expressed an unequivocal desire to leave their abductors, most of the abducted children working in the mines expressed the wish to be reunited with their families. A delegation from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) visited Sierra Leone from 21 to 25 January to further examine the impact of the war on women.

41. Groups of abducted women in Kono, Bombali, Port Loko and Tonkolili districts who were abandoned by their captors have started to participate in community-based reintegration projects initiated by child protection agencies to reinforce the reunification of families and the reintegration of children. Following the disarmament process, there are increasing numbers of street children registered in Freetown and the provincial capitals of Bo, Kenema and Makeni. On 28 February, UNAMSIL launched the most comprehensive report to date on the incidence and effects of war-related sexual violence in Sierra Leone, based on research undertaken by Physicians for Human Rights, an organization based in the United States, with the support of the Mission.

42. UNAMSIL has in place an ongoing training programme, for all its contingents, on the rights of women and children. Under this programme, the Mission's human rights officers and the Child Protection Adviser provide training to the peacekeepers as part of their induction. In addition, the Training and Evaluation Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been pursuing a vigorous policy of improved training of troops on these issues. It has developed a gender awareness-training module for the military and civilian police components, which has been administered in four peacekeeping missions, including UNAMSIL.

43. As indicated in my ninth report to the Security Council (S/2001/228), allegations of sexual exploitation of minors and girls by United Nations personnel were reported to UNAMSIL early in 2001, and the Mission conducted an investigation, but no specific cases were brought to its attention. In January 2002, UNICEF and CARITAS-Makeni reported to my Special Representative several cases of alleged sexual exploitation of minors by peacekeepers in Kabala, Bo and Lungi. On 23 February, the UNAMSIL Child Protection Adviser and the Mission's Human Rights Section started monitoring the peacekeepers in Lungi. A joint investigation with UNICEF and CARITAS-Makeni will be conducted on the specific cases reported in Lungi, Kabala and Bo.

44. On 26 February, a joint assessment mission of UNHCR and Save the Children United Kingdom released a report alleging that United Nations and non-governmental organizations personnel were involved in the sexual exploitation of children and women in refugee camps in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. My Spokesman issued a statement on 27 February, reiterating the United Nations zero tolerance policy for such abuses. It is my intention to have this matter investigated in an expeditious and transparent manner by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and I have instructed all United Nations agencies to take swift disciplinary measures against any of their staff members found to be involved in such unacceptable acts.

45. UNAMSIL has publicly invited those concerned to provide any information that could assist the Mission's investigation. Recently, the Mission's Deputy Force Commander visited all contingents in the field to impress upon the troops the importance of strict adherence to the highest standard of behaviour as stipulated in the code of conduct for peacekeepers. In addition, a meeting of contingent commanders was convened at Freetown, at which it was stressed that the commanders would be personally held responsible for the conduct of their troops. UNAMSIL has also decided to immediately create special child protection committees in each deployed unit to monitor the conduct of the Mission's personnel, and the Mission will establish coordinating mechanisms with the Regional Child Protection Committees set up by the Government, in order to gather information on alleged violations.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

46. On 3 January, my Special Representative presented to President Kabbah the names of the four proposed national commissioners on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, while the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has submitted nominations for three international commissioners. In the meantime, UNAMSIL, together with local and international non-governmental organizations, continued to conduct sensitization activities on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

47. A planning mission from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Sierra Leone from 13 to 17 January to discuss with the Government of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL and other partners practical issues relating to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Following the visit, an interim Executive Secretary of the Commission was appointed. The interim Secretariat is scheduled to begin work before the end of March 2002. On 21 February, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights launched an appeal to donors to contribute funds to the budget of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which amounts to almost $10 million for the first 15 months.

Special Court

48. The background to the recent planning mission's visit to Sierra Leone was set out in my twelfth report (S/2001/1195, paras. 71-72). The report of the planning mission has been issued as document S/2002/246. During the visit to Sierra Leone a significant amount of time was devoted to discussing with the Government, non-governmental organizations and other bodies the availability locally of resources to support the creation and operation of the Special Court. In spite of the best efforts of those concerned it was obvious that the resources required would either be in short supply or, mostly, non-existent. Given the need for the Special Court to operate within a tightly drawn budget and, equally, the need to make early progress, it was inevitable that the potential offered by the presence of UNAMSIL would be considered.

49. The planning mission concluded, first, that UNAMSIL would be able to offer assistance in areas of crucial importance in logistical support, and in the fields of personnel administration, finance, communication, transport and procurement. In each of

those areas the administrative infrastructure of UNAMSIL is already well established and, subject to the understanding that assistance from UNAMSIL in these areas would be on a reimbursable basis, in some cases involving the funding of the provision of additional staff to supplement existing UNAMSIL resources, under UNAMSIL management, it would be at no cost to UNAMSIL. It would seem to make good sense to utilize a well-established infrastructure to support the operation of both the Mission and the Court, in respect of certain similar core functions, thereby making the most effective use of the funding provided by Member States.

50. In addition, UNAMSIL would be in a position to provide evidence to the Prosecutor gathered by its Human Rights Section and from other local sources and its rich experience in conducting a successful local campaign of sensitization in respect of both the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

VIII. Humanitarian aspects

Donor consultations

51. From 4 to 8 February, representatives of 12 donor countries and institutions visited Sierra Leone for consultations with the Government, United Nations agencies and international and national non-governmental organizations. The primary objective of the consultations was to review the humanitarian needs of the country as presented in the consolidated appeal process for 2002, and to mobilize resources for the resettlement and reintegration of displaced persons and refugees. In addition, the consultations sought to further sensitize donors to the need for sustained assistance for post-conflict recovery and the transition to sustainable development. The donors reiterated their commitment to sustaining their support to Sierra Leone beyond the elections.

Refugees and returnees

52. There are currently approximately 107,000 Sierra Leonean refugees being assisted by UNHCR in camps in the subregion, as well as an additional estimated 80,000 unregistered refugees living outside camps. Since September 2000, UNHCR has assisted the repatriation of 68,698 refugees, adding to tens of thousands who have returned spontaneously. A total of 17,846 displaced returnees have so far been assisted by UNHCR to resettle in their areas of origin.

53. As indicated earlier, the armed conflict in Liberia has resulted in new influxes of Liberian refugees and Sierra Leonean returnees since mid-December 2001. In December, there was an influx of 200 Liberian refugees and 3,000 Sierra Leonean returnees. As at 6 March, over 10,700 Liberians and more than 7,400 Sierra Leoneans had been registered by immigration authorities at the main crossing point in Jendema, southern Sierra Leone. In Buedu and Koindu in the east, there has been a further influx of approximately 1,600 Liberian refugees since the end of January 2002.

54. UNHCR and the Government of Sierra Leone are informing the Liberian refugees in border areas of Kailahun and Jendema about the security risks of remaining in border areas and about the Government's request that they move to camps in Bo district. UNAMSIL, at the request of UNHCR, has mounted an operation to transport the refugees and returnees from the border areas to Bo and Kenema districts. Currently, UNHCR is assisting 5,835 refugees who have moved to Jimi Bagbo refugee camp and to temporary settlements, which are being transformed into refugee camps. The recent influx adds to a previous refugee population of 7,000 who have been in Sierra Leone for the past decade.

55. UNHCR-facilitated repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees by ship from Guinea is in progress, at a rate of 500 repatriates per week. The number is expected to increase to 1,500 per week transported by road in mid-March, once the Kambia border post becomes operational. Facilitated repatriation from Liberia started on 13 February, and 1,741 refugees had been repatriated as at 26 February. Small numbers of Sierra Leoneans are also being repatriated from other asylum countries in the subregion.

Resettlement of internally displaced persons

56. As of January 2002, some 204,000 displaced persons were registered and being assisted by United Nations agencies. The resettlement of internally displaced persons is being conducted in phases. Under phase one, carried out in December 2001, 4,000 internally displaced persons and 13,000 returnees based in camps and host communities in Port Loko district were resettled to Kambia and Port Loko districts. The resettlement of displaced persons from the Western

Area (Freetown) and Tonkolili districts to Kambia, Port Loko and Bombali districts started in February 2002, under phase two.

57. With the completion of the disarmament process, the districts of Koinadugu, Tonkolili, Bombali and Kono and parts of Kailahun district were declared safe for resettlement. There are over 260,000 internally displaced persons and returnees that need to be assisted with food and non-food resettlement packages, as well as transportation during phase three of the resettlement in these areas. It is expected that this phase will be well under way prior to the commencement of the rainy season and the elections. The humanitarian community has approached UNAMSIL for assistance in transporting the displaced persons to their areas of origin. The World Food Programme has indicated that it expects to encounter a break in its food pipeline at the critical season in July if it does not receive immediate contributions to cover a shortfall of 25,000 tons.

HIV/AIDS

58. Since my last report, UNAMSIL has continued to provide information to its military and civilian personnel about the impact of HIV/AIDS, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1308 (2000). A selected number of peacekeepers participated in the Mission's train-the-trainers programme, which seeks to impart knowledge of HIV/AIDS issues to peacekeepers and create awareness through trained representatives.

IX. Economic developments

59. The reporting period witnessed the continuing recovery of Sierra Leone's economy. The improvement in the security situation, the increasing consumer and investor confidence, the drastic reduction in barriers to domestic mobility and trade, the stepped-up resettlement and rehabilitation activities, the increase in agricultural output, the expansion of donor-financed imports and the strong growth of domestic commerce have all contributed to the generally favourable economic trends. Fiscal and monetary policies contained inflation to 3.4 per cent in 2001, despite the healthy 30 per cent depreciation of the Leone (completely reversing its sustained appreciation of 2000). Exports are also gradually beginning to rebound. Recorded exports ($6 million in 1999 and $13 million in 2000) rose to $26 million in 2001, 90 per cent of which consisted of diamonds channelled through the certification process ($24 million compared to $10 million in 1999). Exports adjusted for trade partner data on diamond imports from Sierra Leone reached $120 million in 2001 from $61 million in 1999. However, large aid flows financed a 34 per cent increase in imports in 2001 and an expansion of the current account deficit to 29 per cent of GDP.

60. These favourable developments notwithstanding, the overall economic situation of Sierra Leone remains precarious. At the end of 2000, the net present value of the country's $1.2 billion public and publicly guaranteed external debt was 133 per cent of GDP, and 757 per cent of exports. At the same time, the country reached the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative "decision point" in March 2002, which provides interim debt relief. This relief would be made permanent should Sierra Leone continue to perform well under its IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility Programme over the next couple of years to satisfy the conditions for reaching the "completion point". With enhanced HIPC assistance, Sierra Leone's debt service to exports ratio would drop from 74 per cent in 2001 to 5 per cent by 2005. Debt service savings would amount to about $37 million per annum during 2002-2005 (5 per cent of projected GDP annually).

X. Financial aspects

61. The General Assembly, by its resolution 56/251 of 24 December 2001, appropriated the amount of $692 million gross for the maintenance of UNAMSIL for the financial period from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002. I have also submitted a detailed budget amounting to $669,476,400 gross for the maintenance of the Mission for the 2002-2003 financial period, which is currently before the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly for oversight and legislative review and consideration.

62. Therefore, should the Security Council approve my recommendation set out in paragraph 70 below as to the extension of the mandate of UNAMSIL, the cost for the operation and maintenance of the Mission during the extension period will be limited to resources approved by the General Assembly.

63. As at 28 February 2002, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMSIL

amounted to $365.4 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $2,001 million.

XI. Observations and recommendations

64. The completion of the disarmament process and the deployment of UNAMSIL throughout the country have created a relatively more secure environment, which provides an opportunity for Sierra Leone to hold free, fair and credible elections, and to concentrate on national reconciliation and recovery, and building sustainable institutions. After more than 10 years of a brutal civil war, this represents a unique chance, which Sierra Leoneans and their leaders cannot afford to miss. It is absolutely essential that the Government, the former armed groups, the political parties and civil society seize this opportunity and return their country to durable peace and stability.

65. The most urgent priority for Sierra Leone at this stage is to ensure that the forthcoming elections are conducted in a credible manner and in a reasonably secure and peaceful environment. I am encouraged by the progress made so far in the preparations for the elections, with the assistance of the international community. The peaceful atmosphere that characterized the conduct of the voter registration exercise bodes well for the next phases of the electoral process. The National Electoral Commission must, however, draw the necessary lessons from this exercise and rectify all shortcomings, particularly its organizational and management problems. The Commission must also coordinate closely with UNHCR and expedite arrangements for the registration of returning refugees.

66. The electoral campaign period, which will begin in the coming weeks, will be an equally critical phase. The people of Sierra Leone expect the political parties to conduct their electoral campaign activities in a responsible and mature manner, so as to preserve the prevailing stability. The international partners have made commendable efforts to ensure that all political parties get a fair chance to contest the elections. In particular, the National Democratic Institute and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy deserve praise for the role they are playing in promoting political party development. I also commend the Governments of Sierra Leone and Nigeria for the assistance they have extended to RUF to enable it to transform itself into a political party. The National Electoral Commission must operate in a transparent and impartial manner, however, and should engage all the stakeholders, in particular the political parties and civil society groups, in more regular consultations, so as to sustain confidence in the electoral process.

67. The recent public statements by the leaders of RUF, expressing their commitment to transforming their movement into a political party and joining the mainstream of the democratic process, are a welcome development. They should be strongly encouraged to continue along this constructive path, and to actively participate in the party development projects of the National Democratic Institute and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, which are intended to benefit all legitimate Sierra Leonean political parties. The sincerity of the commitment of the RUF party to the democratic process will, however, be measured by how it conducts itself before, during and after the elections.

68. Following the announcement of the election results, it will be necessary to closely monitor the reaction of all the parties and take stock of the evolving security environment, with a view to ensuring a peaceful transition to the newly elected government. In this connection, UNAMSIL is preparing for all possible contingencies, and is determined to assist in ensuring that stability is maintained in the post-election period.

69. As stated in my last report (S/2001/1195), the elections will not by themselves provide a lasting solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone. Without well-established State institutions throughout the country, and security agencies that are capable of defending the country from both internal and external threats, the stability so far achieved in Sierra Leone will remain vulnerable. In the period immediately following the elections, the efforts of the newly elected government and the international community must therefore focus on peace consolidation. Urgent attention will need to be paid to the unfinished aspects of the peace process, particularly the extension of State authority, the reintegration of ex-combatants and the restoration of the Government's control over diamond mining. Those efforts will need to be complemented by the reactivation of the judicial system, the strengthening of the law enforcement agencies, the restoration of basic

public services and recovery efforts throughout the country.

70. The international community has invested heavily in Sierra Leone, both politically and financially. It is therefore imperative that it safeguard the significant progress made and stay the course until its objectives are met. Despite the completion of the disarmament process, for now, the security situation in the country and in the Mano River Union subregion remains fundamentally fragile. It will be some time before Sierra Leone's security forces have the capacity to take full responsibility for the country's security. Without sustained stability, it will not be possible to accomplish the peace consolidation efforts described above. The continued engagement of UNAMSIL after the elections will therefore be indispensable. For this reason, I recommend that the mandate of the Mission be extended for another six months, until 30 September 2002.

71. Should the security situation in Sierra Leone continue to improve after the elections, adjustments will need to be made to the current strength, composition and deployment of UNAMSIL troops. As indicated earlier, the initial planning for those adjustments is already under way. It will be necessary, however, to watch how the post-election situation evolves and conduct a thorough assessment of developments in both Sierra Leone and the neighbouring countries, to ensure that any adjustment proposals are suited to the prevailing situation. Such an assessment, together with specific benchmarks related to the peace consolidation efforts, will be contained in my September report to the Security Council.

72. The process of national recovery has to begin early so that it contributes to the earliest consolidation of peace. Aspects of the recovery programme that are critical to the stabilization of the country, in particular the reintegration of displaced persons and returning refugees, employment creation, and the repair of vital infrastructure, should be accorded priority. United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions will have to be actively involved in these stabilization efforts. The United Nations country team has already begun developing a strategy for the transition from humanitarian assistance to supporting national recovery and peace-building in Sierra Leone.

73. National reconciliation and ensuring accountability for atrocities committed during the conflict will also constitute an important aspect of peace consolidation. The preparations for the establishment of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will no doubt gather momentum after the elections, and the strains associated with the efforts to address the atrocities of the past will need to be carefully managed. In this regard, I expect the Government, UNAMSIL and civil society to work closely together and step up activities aimed at informing the public about the functioning of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

74. I remain very much concerned about the recent escalation of the conflict in Liberia. It will be extremely difficult to safeguard the security and stability achieved in Sierra Leone as long as conflict persists in a neighbouring State. I therefore welcome the Mano River Union summit meeting held at Rabat on 27 February. It is my hope that this event marks the beginning of sustained dialogue among the leaders of the Mano River Union subregion, which should address the sources of instability in the subregion and build confidence among the three countries. I wish to commend His Majesty King Mohammed VI for facilitating the summit meeting.

75. I am deeply disturbed by the recent reports of sexual exploitation of minors and women in the subregion. As stated above, I have asked the Office of Internal Oversight Services to conduct a thorough investigation. In addition to strengthening preventive and disciplinary measures by the concerned United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, it would also be important to address the underlying causes of the problem, including poverty and the breakdown of community values. With regard to the alleged misconduct on the part of peacekeepers, UNAMSIL has been instructed to conduct a vigorous and thorough investigation. At the same time, it is imperative for the troop-contributing countries to support the United Nations in implementing the preventive measures developed by the Mission.

76. In conclusion, I wish to commend the people and Government of Sierra Leone, my Special Representative, and all UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel for the remarkable progress achieved during the reporting period. I would also like, once again, to express my appreciation to ECOWAS, as well as to the United Nations agencies, the World Bank, many individual donor countries, and national and international non-governmental organizations for their unwavering support for the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 8 March 2002

Authorized strength: Military: 17,500 (up to 260 military observers)
Civilian police: current strength open; currently planning up to 90

	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Sector HQ staff*	*Total*
Bangladesh	12	18	4 174	65	4 269
Bolivia	6				6
Canada	5				5
China	6				6
Croatia	10				10
Czech Republic	5				5
Denmark	2				2
Egypt	10				10
France	1				1
Gambia	24				24
Germany			12		12
Ghana	6	10	847	58	921
Guinea	12	4	776		793
Indonesia	10				10
Jordan	10	1	119		130
Kenya	11	14	996	63	1 084
Kyrgyzstan	2				2
Malaysia	10				10
Mali	8				8
Nepal	10	5	800		815
New Zealand	2				2
Nigeria	10	15	3 236	64	3 325
Pakistan	10	17	4 203	50	4 280
Russian Federation	15	4	109		128
Slovakia	2				2
Sweden	3				3
Thailand	5				5
Ukraine	5	5	616		626
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15	7			22
United Republic of Tanzania	12				12

	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Sector HQ staff*	*Total*
Uruguay	11				11
Zambia	10	5	813	5	833
Total	**260**	**105**	**16 701**	**305**	**17 371**

Force Commander: Kenya; Deputy Force Commander: Nigeria; Chief Military Observer: Pakistan.

Civilian police: Bangladesh: 4; Canada: 4; Gambia: 4; Ghana: 8; India: 2; Jordan: 3; Kenya: 5; Malaysia: 3; Nepal: 5; Niger: 2; Nigeria: 3; Norway: 4; Senegal: 3; Sri Lanka: 2; United Republic of Tanzania: 1; Zambia: 8; Zimbabwe: 6; total: 73.

UNAMSIL
Deployment as of
8 March 2002
National capital
Provincial capital
Town, village
International boundary
Provincial boundary
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
GUINEA
SIERRA LEONE
LIBERIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTHERN
EASTERN
WESTERN AREA
SOUTHERN
Mamou
Faranah
Medina Dula
Falaba
Musaia
Bafodia
Gberia Fotombu
Kabala
Bendugu
Banian
Konta
Kamakwie
Kamalu
Fadugu
Koinadugu
Bambaya
Yombiro
Fandie
Forecariah
Kambia
Rokupr
Mange
Port Loko
Mape
Lunsar
Rokel Bridge
Pepel
Lungi
Freetown
Goderich
Wellington
Hastings
Magburaka
Matotoka
Baibunda
Ribia
Matebo
Pendembu
Batkanu
Gbinti
Mamuka
Binkolo
Makeni
Alikalia
Bumbuna
Bendugu
Kayima
Yomadu
Teteya
Masingbi
Yengema
Koidu-Sefadu
Njaiama Sewafe
Njaiama
Bendou Bodou
Kailahun
Buedu
Manowa
Pendembu
Daru
Segbwema
Kenema
Tongo
Panguma
Lago
Bendu
Mano Jct
Tokpombu
Joru
Blama
Potoru
Gorahun
Kongo
Zimmi
Pujehun
Sumbuya
Koribundu
Kpetewoma
Gbangbatok
Nitti
Bonthe
Matru
Sherbro I.
Sherbro River
Sembehun
Shenge
Sieromco
Mokanje
Bumpe
Tikonko
Bo
Mano
Njala
Taiama
Mongeri
Yele
Mile 91
Waterloo
Rotifunk
Moyamba
Magbuntoso
Hastings
Wellington
Masiaka
Rokel Bridge
Port Loko
Lunsar
Mape
Lungi
Pepel
Freetown
Goderich
Robertsport
Kle
Bong
Bomi Hills
Bopolu
Sulima
Bendaja
Zimmi
Kongo
Gorahun
Potoru
Tokpombu
Joru
Blama
Kenema
Segbwema
Daru
Pendembu
Manowa
Kailahun
Buedu
Bendou Bodou
Yomadu
Masingbi
Yengema
Koidu-Sefadu
Njaiama Sewafe
Njaiama
Teteya
Kayima
Alikalia
Bumbuna
Bendugu
Makeni
Binkolo
Matotoka
Magburaka
Baibunda
Ribia
Matebo
Pendembu
Batkanu
Gbinti
Mamuka
Kamalu
Fadugu
Koinadugu
Bambaya
Yombiro
Banian
Bendugu
Gberia Fotombu
Bafodia
Musaia
Falaba
Faranah
Medina Dula
Mamou
Konta
Kamakwie
Forecariah
Fandie